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ABSTRACT

The bilingual educational opportunities in the universities of Canada's primarily anglophone provinces are reviewed, focusing on the prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba). The information is drawn from a survey of the nine universities in the prairie provinces concerning courses offered in French to students from bilingual secondary programs. Survey responses indicated a varying levels of bilingual educational opportunities, from almost none to full-fledged bilingual programs. Examples of efforts made include: (1) committees considering the issue; (2) proposed French sections of multi-section courses; (3) teacher education programs to prepare additional qualified bilingual and immersion program teachers; (4) undergraduate bilingual degree programs; (5) French-language first-year courses in a variety of disciplines; (6) courses in the arts offered in French; (7) consideration of distance education in French; (8) introductory social sciences courses in French; (9) education courses in French; (10) French-language courses for the non-francophone parents of children in elementary and secondary immersion programs; (11) campus bilingual centers offering a variety of courses in French; (12) an undergraduate education degree program offered in French; and (13) affiliation with a francophone university. It is concluded that developments in postsecondary bilingual education in this region are limited and inconsistent, but that there is a growing movement to expand offerings. (MSE)

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BILINGUAL ALTERNATIVES AT THE POST-SECONDARY LEVEL: UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS IN CANADA'S PRAIRIE PROVINCES

BY

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER IS TO REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITIES IN CANADA'S PRIMARILY ANGLOPHONE REGIONS OUTSIDE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES (ALBERTA, SASKATCHEWAN, AND MANITOBA). BEFORE ATTEMPTING SUCH A REVIEW, LET ME SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT "WHERE I'M COMING FROM" ON THIS SUBJECT. AS AN INDIVIDUAL, I AM NOT A LINGUIST, A LANGUAGE EDUCATOR, OR A FRENCH TEACHER (ALTHOUGH I DID TEACH GRADE SEVEN FRENCH FOR TWO YEARS IN THE SOOKE SCHOOL DISTRICT ON VANCOUVER ISLAND DURING THE EARLY 1960'S). NOR AM I BILINGUAL YET (ALTHOUGH MY MOTHER IS FLUENTLY BILINGUAL, HAVING PURSUED GRADUATE STUDIES AT THE SORBONNE AND TAUGHT FRENCH AT VICTORIA COLLEGE; I HAVE A DAUGHTER CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN FRENCH IMMERSION AT A WINNIPEG PUBLIC SCHOOL; AND I AM PLANNING TO DEVOTE MY UP-COMING LEAVE TO COMPLETING THE PROCESS OF RENDERING MYSELF AT LEAST FUNCTIONALLY BILINGUAL, HAVING PREVIOUSLY UNDERTAKEN SOME SPORADIC FRENCH TRAINING WITH ONTARIO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES DURING MY YEARS IN TORONTO). WHILE I AM, THUS, BY NO MEANS AN EXPERT ON THIS SUBJECT, I AM NEVERTHELESS PERSONALLY COMMITTED TO THE CONCEPT OF CANADA AS AN OFFICIALLY BILINGUAL COUNTRY, BY WHICH I MEAN NOT ONLY THAT CANADIANS SHOULD BE ABLE TO BE SERVED BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND THE COURTS IN EITHER OFFICIAL LANGUAGE FROM COAST-TO-COAST BUT ALSO THAT ULTIMATELY THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO MEET THE BASIC NEEDS OF DAILY LIFE NO MATTER WHICH OFFICIAL

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LANGUAGE THEY CHOOSE TO USE. MOREOVER, I HAVE NO DIFFICULTY WITH THE CONCEPT OF SUCH OFFICIAL BILINGUALISM OPERATING WITHIN THE RICHLY MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT OF WESTERN CANADA.

SECONDLY, AS A UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATOR, I BELIEVE THAT HIGHER EDUCATION HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO APPLY ITS RELEVANT RESOURCES IN THE INTEREST OF INCREASED BILINGUALISM; UNIVERSITIES HAVE THIS RESPONSIBILITY AS NATIONAL (NOT FEDERAL) INSTITUTIONS IN AN OFFICIALLY BILINGUAL COUNTRY, THEY HAVE THIS RESPONSIBILITY AS RECIPIENTS OF AN INCREASINGLY BILINGUAL GROUP OF SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES, AND THEY HAVE THIS RESPONSIBILITY AS CENTRES FOR THE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF OUR CULTURE. THUS, IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE FOR US TO NEGLECT THE CHALLENGES TO WHICH THIS PAPER IS ADDRESSED.

FINALLY, AS A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR AND SCHOLAR OF EDUCATION, I AM AWARE THAT BILINGUALISM CAN BE TAUGHT AND LEARNED; WE NOW HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY TO DO IT, AND OUR RESEARCH INDICATES THAT IT CAN BE DONE RATHER WELL. MOREOVER, I AM AWARE THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE ENGAGED IN A PARTICULAR KIND OF EDUCATION BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE (OR IN THE CASE OF YOUNG CHILDREN, BECAUSE THEIR PARENTS WANT THEM TO BE) ARE MORE LIKELY TO ACHIEVE REALLY SUCCESSFUL, LONG-LASTING LEARNING THAN THOSE WHOSE ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION IS COERCED; THIS LEADS ME INEVITABLY TO THE CONCLUSION THAT, IF OUR GOAL IS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CANADIANS WHO CAN OPERATE COMFORTABLY IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES, WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE OUR EFFORTS ON THOSE WHO ARE MOTIVATED TO DO SO RATHER THAN PURSUING SUCH SELF-DEFEATING POLICIES AS REQUIRNG THE UNWILLING TO MEET A VIRTUALLY USELESS AND POSSIBLY

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DANGEROUS SECOND-LANGUAGE CRITERION FOR ENTRY TO OR GRADUATION FROM UNIVERSITY (EXCEPT FOR THOSE MAJORING IN SECOND-LANGUAGE STUDIES OR PERHAPS IN CANADIAN STUDIES).

NOW THAT I HAVE EXPOSED SOME OF MY LIMITATIONS AND BIASES ON THIS SUBJECT, LET ME WADE BOLDLY INTO A BRIEF REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES. IN ORDER TO PUT THIS REPORT TOGETHER, I REQUESTED CURRENT INFORMATION FROM EACH OF THE NINE UNIVERSITIES IN THAT REGION. I HEARD FROM ALL OF THEM, BUT THE AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED VARIED GREATLY - AND IN ANY CASE, TIME LIMITS PERMIT ME TO GIVE ONLY A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION IN EACH INSTITUTION. THERE ARE FOUR DEGREE-GRANTING UNIVERSITIES IN ALBERTA. THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE REPORTED NO USEFUL INFORMATION ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT THIS MATTER WAS BEING ADDRESSED BY THEIR GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL. THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY HAS RECENTLY ESTABLISHED A STANDING COMMITTEE ON BILINGUAL EDUCATION TO CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF AN IMPENDING INFLUX OF STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM BILINGUAL SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS. THIS COMMITTEE IS EXAMINING THE PROJECTED NUMBERS OF SUCH STUDENTS AND THE EXPECTATIONS THEY MIGHT HAVE FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AT AN ESSENTIALLY ANGLOPHONE UNIVERSITY. RECOMMENDATIONS WILL THEN BE DEVELOPED FOR SUCH POSSIBILITIES AS OFFERING FRENCH-LANGUAGE SECTIONS OF MULTI-SECTIONED COURSES (ONE SUCH COURSE IN FIRST-YEAR ECONOMICS HAS BEEN PLANNED) AND FOR MEETING THE RESOURCE NEEDS TO SUPPORT SUCH OFFERINGS. MEANWHILE, THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION IS DEVELOPING PROGRAM PLANS FOR THE PREPARATION OF MORE TEACHERS QUALIFIED TO TEACH IN

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BILINGUAL AND IMMERSION PROGRAMS AT BOTH THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVELS. SO THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY IS IN THE PREPARATORY STAGES AND DOES NOT YET OFFER MUCH FOR BILINGUALLY EDUCATED STUDENTS. CONVERSELY, THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA THROUGH ITS FACULTE SAINT-JEAN NOW OFFERS BILINGUAL PROGRAMS LEADING TO THE B.A., B.ED., AND B.SC. DEGREES AS WELL AS FRENCH-LANGUAGE FIRST-YEAR COURSES FOR STUDENTS IN A VARIETY OF PROFESSIONAL FACULTIES. THE FACULTE'S FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT HAS INCREASED BY MORE THAN SEVENTY PERCENT OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. FINALLY, ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY (A PACE-SETTER IN CANADIAN DISTANCE EDUCATION AT THE POST-SECONDARY LEVEL) OFFERS NOT ONLY FRENCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE COURSES BUT ALSO TWO ARTS COURSES WITH FRENCH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION; ATHABASCA HOPES TO EXPAND THIS FUNCTION, COMPLEMENTING CAMPUS OFFERINGS OF COURSES WITH FRENCH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION BY DISTANCE DELIVERY OF SUCH COURSES IN CASES WHERE NO QUALIFIED FRANCOPHONE INSTRUCTOR IS AVAILABLE OR THE PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO IS TOO LOW TO BE FINANCIALLY VIABLE ON CAMPUS.

BOTH OF SASKATCHEWAN'S DEGREE-GRANTING UNIVERSITIES HAVE TAKEN IMPORTANT INITIATIVES IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION. AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN, A COUPLE OF INTRODUCTORY SOCIAL SCIENCE COURSES HAVE BEEN OFFERED WITH FRENCH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION, ALTHOUGH ENROLLMENTS HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTING. SEVEN EDUCATION COURSES HAVE BEEN OFFERED WITH FRENCH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION TO HELP MEET THE NEEDS OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS IN BILINGUAL OR IMMERSION SCHOOLS; PLANS FOR THESE COURSES WERE DEVELOPED DURING MY TERM AS DEAN OF EDUCATION THERE, ALONG WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WHAT IS NOW CALLED THE CENTRE FOR SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION WHICH

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PROVIDES FRENCH-LANGUAGE COURSES TO NON-FRANCOPHONES WITH CHILDREN ENROLLED IN LOCAL ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY IMMERSION PROGRAMS. THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA HAS TAKEN A MORE COMPREHENSIVE, STRUCTURED APPROACH THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT, BACK IN 1968, OF ITS BILINGUAL CENTRE, WHICH OFFERS BETWEEN SIX AND EIGHT COURSES TAUGHT IN FRENCH EACH YEAR IN SUCH DISCIPLINES AS HISTORY, SOCIOLOGY, MUSIC, MATHEMATICS, COMPUTER SCIENCE, PSYCHOLOGY, EDUCATION, AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE. ENROLLMENT IN THESE COURSES HAS INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY OVER THE YEARS, AND DURING 1983-84 THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION REGISTERED TWENTY-ONE STUDENTS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF A B.ED. PROGRAM IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION. BESIDES OFFERING ITS BILINGUAL PROGRAMMING, REGINA'S CENTRE PROVIDES A TRANSLATION SERVICE, A LANGUAGE SCHOOL, A SUMMER PROGRAM, SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, AND A LIBRARY WITH FRENCH-LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS AND TEACHING MATERIALS.

MOVING TO MANITOBA, I RECEIVED NO RESPONSE FROM BRANDON UNIVERSITY EXCEPT FOR AN INDICATION OF INTENT TO REPLY. THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA, LIKE THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA, HAS THE BENEFIT OF AN AFFILIATED FRENCH-LANGUAGE INSTITUTION, THE COLLEGE UNIVERSITAIRE DE ST. BONIFACE, WHICH OFFERS IN FRENCH A BROAD RANGE OF COURSES LEADING TO THE B.A., B.ED., AND B.SC. DEGREES; IN ADDITION, THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA'S MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAM IS NOW OFFERED AT THE COLLEGE WITH FRENCH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION. MOREOVER, THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA HAS EXPLORED THE NEEDS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR OFFERING SOME OF ITS OWN COURSES WITH FRENCH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE FRANCOPHONES AND SECONDARY IMMERSION GRADUATES WHO CHOOSE TO STUDY

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THERE RATHER THAN AT ST. BONIFACE. FINALLY, WE COME TO MY OWN INSTITUTION, THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG. WE ARE HOPING TO ESTABLISH A CENTRE OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION AT OUR DOWNTOWN CAMPUS WHICH CONCENTRATES ON UNDERGRADUATE OFFERINGS IN ARTS, EDUCATION, AND SCIENCE. THIS CENTRE WOULD ACCOMMODATE THE GROWING NUMBER OF FRENCH IMMERSION GRADUATES FROM THE MANITOBA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND OTHER BILINGUAL STUDENTS FROM ACROSS CANADA WHO WISH TO STUDY AT OUR UNIVERSITY. AMONG THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROPOSED CENTRE ARE THE FOLLOWING:

(1) TO EXPAND LANGUAGE OFFERINGS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS WHO COME TO THE UNIVERSITY FLUENTLY BILINGUAL;

(2) TO OFFER A SELECTION OF DEGREE-CREDIT COURSES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES, AND NATURAL SCIENCES IN FRENCH THROUGH THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE;

(3) TO ESTABLISH A GEOGRAPHIC LOCUS FOR THE BILINGUAL CENTRE AND TO SECURE A STAFF WHICH COULD COORDINATE FUNCTIONS AND PROVIDE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SUPPORT FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM;

(4) TO AUGMENT THE BILINGUAL COMPONENTS OF OUR B.ED. PROGRAM SO AS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF MANITOBA PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS QUALIFIED TO TEACH IN THE FRENCH MILIEU OF DUAL-TRACK SCHOOLS;

(5) TO INCREASE OUR SUMMER INSTITUTE PROGRAM WHICH ALLOWS FOR THE INTENSIVE FRENCH TRAINING OF CERTIFICATED

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ANGLOPHONE TEACHERS IN MANITOBA SO AS TO INCREASE THE PROVINCE'S ABILITY TO EMBRACE BILINGUAL EDUCATION WITHOUT DISPLACING TEACHERS CURRENTLY HOLDING POSITIONS IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM;

(6) TO ESTABLISH A STRATEGIC RESEARCH GROUP WHOSE EFFORTS WOULD FOCUS ON THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND COGNITIVE DIMENSIONS OF BILINGUALISM; AND

(7) TO OFFER, AS AN AUGMENTATION OF OUR CONVERSATIONAL FRENCH PROGRAM, A PROGRAM OF "PARENT IMMERSION" TO EASE THE FEAR HELD BY A NUMBER OF UNILINGUAL PARENTS OF LOOSING CONTROL OVER THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION.

WE CURRENTLY HAVE A CADRE OF A DOZEN FACULTY MEMBERS WHO ARE PREPARED (IN SOME CASES WITH MODEST LINGUISTIC UPGRADING) TO OFFER UP TO TWENTY COURSES IN A WIDE RANGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE DISCIPLINES WITH FRENCH AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION. IN ADDITION, OF COURSE, WE TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF VARIOUS FEDERAL, INTERPROVINCIAL, AND INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE BILINGUAL CAPABILITIES OF NUMEROUS STUDENTS AND SOME INSTRUCTORS.

LET ME CONCLUDE BY OBSERVING THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION AT OUR PRAIRIE UNIVERSITIES ARE CLEARLY SPOTTY. SOME INSTITUTIONS HAVE LAUNCHED OR ARE PLANNING AMBITIOUS PROGRAMS IN RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIAL PERCEIVED NEEDS, WHILE OTHERS ARE APPARENTLY SATISFIED WITH AD HOC AND RATHER UNCOORDINATED REACTIONS TO PRESSURES AS THEY ARISE. IN GENERAL, THOUGH, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THERE IS A GROWING MOVEMENT UNDERWAY ACROSS THE PRAIRIES TO EXPAND THE BILINGUAL OFFERINGS IN HIGHER EDUCATION. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THIS

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MOVEMENT WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND I AM OPTIMISTIC THAT WE CAN PROMOTE INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION IN ORDER TO LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER'S EXPERIENCES AND AVOID THE COSTLY REINVENTION OF WHEELS THAT ARE ALREADY TURNING QUITE WELL ELSEWHERE.